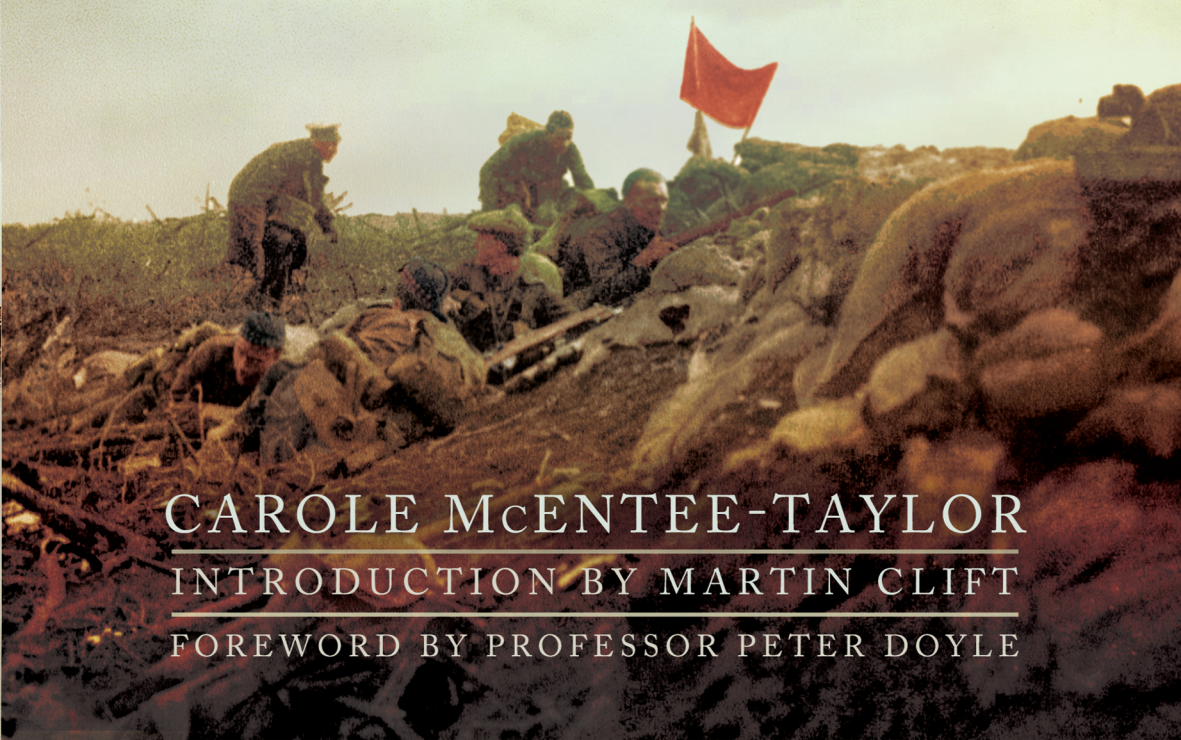
THE BATTLE OF BELLEWAARDE

JUNE 1915



CAROLE McENTEE-TAYLOR

INTRODUCTION BY MARTIN CLIFT

FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR PETER DOYLE

Bellewaarde
June 1915

Bellewaarde June 1915

By Carole McEntee-Taylor

Foreword by Peter Doyle
Introduction by Martin Clift

Hat Badges and other Illustrations by Dawn Monks
http://www.dawnmonksillustrations.co.uk/

Pen & Sword
MILITARY

First published in Great Britain in 2014 by
Pen & Sword History
an imprint of
Pen & Sword Books Ltd
47 Church Street
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 2AS

ISBN 978 1 78340 052 2

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Typeset in Ehrhardt by
Mac Style Ltd, Bridlington, East Yorkshire
Printed and bound in the UK by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CRO 4YY

For a complete list of Pen & Sword titles please contact
PEN & SWORD BOOKS LIMITED
47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS, England
E-mail: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk
Website: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

Bellewaarde, June 1915

Commander in Chief Sir John French would later sum up the day in this despatch:

> *'On 16th June an attack was carried out by the 5th Corps on the Bellewaarde Ridge, east of Ypres. The enemy's front line was captured, many of his dead and wounded being found in the trenches. The troops, pressing forward, gained ground as far East as the Bellewaarde Lake, but found themselves unable to maintain this advanced position. They were, however, successful in securing and consolidating the ground won during the first part of the attack, on a front of a thousand yards, including the advanced portion of the enemy's salient north of the Ypres–Menin Road. During this action the fire of the artillery was most effective, the prisoners testifying to its destructiveness and accuracy. It also prevented the delivery of counter attacks, which were paralysed at the outset. Over two hundred prisoners were taken, besides some machine-guns, trench material and gas apparatus. Holding attacks by the neighbouring 2nd and 6th Corps were successful in helping the main attack, whilst the 36th French Corps cooperated very usefully with artillery fire on Pilkem. Near Hill 60 the 10th Infantry Brigade made four bombing attacks, gaining and occupying about fifty yards of trench.'*

Contents

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank Martin Clift as without him this book would not have been written. I offered to write it because of the obvious passion and dedication that he had invested in ensuring the men of Bellewaarde were not forgotten. Writing the book is intended to enhance his work by bringing the story of Bellewaarde June 1915 to a much wider audience. Although much of the information prior and after the battle stems from my independent research, the chapters about the battle itself use information, letters and personal recollections from the website that Martin has spent several years painstakingly researching and collecting.

I would also like to offer my grateful thanks to Clive McPherson of the Combined Services Museum Maldon for reading the manuscript and correcting any errors relating to military terminology, Robert Flemming, Information and Community Outreach Curator, National Army Museum, for helping me with regimental seniority and author Jack Sheldon and military historian Rob Shäfer for translating large tracts of German text for me. A special thanks to Dawn Monks for her wonderful illustrations. If you'd like to see more of Dawn's work please visit her website http://www.dawnmonksillustrations.co.uk/

I would also like to thank everyone who has given permission for their material to be included and I hope they enjoy the book.

And not least I would like to thank my husband David for his continuing help, support and encouragement.

Foreword

Bellewaarde. To any casual visitor to the battlefields of the old Western Front, travelling eastwards along the old Menin Road, and slowly rising up the low slopes that were so troublesome to the British High Command, Bellewaarde is obscure. Today marred by a theme park that does brisk business in the summer months, in 1915 things were very different. Here was the British frontline, manned by Britain's Regular Army, who had survived the desperate winter of 1914, and the 'Saturday night soldiers' of the Territorial Force who had taken the 'Imperial Service Commitment' to serve overseas. Visitors, perhaps stopping at the Hooge Crater Museum, or the preserved trenches at Hill 62 – Sanctuary Wood – are all the more likely to pass on along the road to explore the front line as it was in 1917.

But for me, Bellewaarde makes a special connection. West of the theme park is a small piece of battlefield terrain marked now by a monument to the Royal Engineers tunnellers who died in later actions. But in the small copse nearby, stands a stone to the Liverpool Scottish, one of the territorial Battalions of the King's Liverpool Regiment. Under the headline 'Another local "Scot" falls', and a photograph of a handsome young man wearing the diced glengarry of the Liverpool Scottish, the *Birkenhead News* recorded the loss of the son of Mr and Mrs Black, of Neptune Street, Birkenhead, 'killed in the charge with his regiment at Hooge on 16 July'. William Black was my grandmother's fiancée. A railwayman, he was 20 when killed. Ultimately, my grandmother, Gertrude Moore, married another man – my grandfather, Arthur Doyle – but William was never forgotten. Like so many others, his body was never found; but his line on the Menin Gate is picked out by my family on every visit to this sacred memorial.

The *Official History* describes Bellewaarde as a 'minor action', its function, like so many others, to act as a diversion for an attack at Givenchy to the south, and to capture the marginally high ground at Hooge. It was also to 'straighten the line', impossible to comprehend as a kind of 'trench house-keeping exercise', but actually essential to reduce the possibility of increased observation and deadly crossfire. So it was that the Battle of Bellewaarde was fought, by men of the regulars and territorials, facing stiff resistance from the Germans arraigned in front of them. And in this rush forward, William Black was killed, and a family memory stored for future generations.

In her carefully researched account of the battle, Carole McEntee-Taylor describes the action, one of many 'minor operations' that came to be fought as part of the British offensive spirit while serving on the Western Front. Examining

the battle from both sides, Carole gives a detailed understanding of the course of the action – and records the loss of the men, British and German during the fateful day.

Reading this account, pause a while at Bellewaarde, when next making the journey eastwards out of Ypres, along the old Menin Road.

Peter Doyle
London

Introduction

I remember as a child being curious about old photographs and on many occasions I would visit our Beautility sideboard and pull out the chocolate biscuit tin where the family photographs were kept. I spent hour upon hour looking at images of my mother and father, grandparents, aunts and uncles and those of my sisters and I that clearly we were not happy having taken of us. All would be replaced only to be pulled out again a few months later.

I was brought up in what can only be described as a very strict family unit and I never asked too many questions as it would usually be seen as impolite, so when we were staying with family I just did not discuss the family history. I do remember however at my grandmother's house a circular bronze plaque was placed on the hall table and I could not resist looking at it. There was a name, 'Austin Frank Broughton' and the words 'He died for freedom and honour.' I thought this a curious object and not knowing what it was I dismissed it from my mind, easily done at ten years of age.

Many years later I was employed by a company as a Training Manager and in late 1996 was given a laptop which would make my job easier, or so they said. I had only used the type of computer that had light green letters and numbers on a dark green screen, so when I discovered that I would have no training on the Windows 95 innovation with a 1.3 GB hard-drive to store masses of information on I almost gave it back, but I was glad that I didn't. To help me learn these new skills I thought I would purchase some software, something that would force me to repeat the same task time and again. Looking on the shelves of the store I came across the only item that looked as though it would help and be interesting. The item was a family history programme and I didn't know it then, but this would set me on a journey that is as interesting today as it was then.

The years of research conducted in dusty archives were really enjoyable and I would recommend getting your hands dirty with the real documents. All the information was carefully added to my computer. The programme also allowed me to add images of my family; the photographs I enjoyed looking at so long ago. There always will be those ancestors of whom there is little or no information and one of those was my great uncle, Austin Frank Broughton. I started to ask questions of the family, but sadly his brothers and sisters had passed away and my mother and her siblings only knew scant information. My uncle showed me a bronze plaque that had been neatly placed in a glass-covered frame and mounted on a wall. When I looked closely I saw that it was the same plaque from my grandmother's hall

table. My uncle explained that Austin had died at Ypres in 1915, but as the family didn't talk about those things he knew little else. However, he did show me a small image of Austin in his uniform. Well the age of the high speed internet had arrived and I was certain I would find something, but I could find nothing and to be honest I didn't really know where to start.

A few years later a friend of mine who was interested in the First World War managed to get hold of some details from Austin's medal index card, but explained that all other records were lost during the Second World War. I found this quite annoying. How can there be so little information? I now had the bit between my teeth and I was determined to crack this conundrum.

In 2007 I found a First World War forum which was dedicated to the battlefields of Ypres and I asked questions about my great uncle. The first snippets came through regarding his regiment, 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, information from the pages of the regimental diary, Bellewaarde, 16 June 1915. I couldn't believe what I was reading. A part of the diary gave details of the casualties and there before me was my great uncle's name, recorded as wounded. I read about what he and his chums went through that day and I was astonished at the carnage.

I went on to look for details of all the men and regiments, British and German, so that I could piece together what had happened that day, and after eighteen months' research I decided to take it a stage further and created the website 'The Battle of Bellewaarde'. This was something I wanted to do so that I could share what I had found and make it easier for those who wished to research soldiers who fought there. I hoped my small contribution would help to ensure those men would never be forgotten.

I started to think more about how to get more visitors to the Bellewaarde website and decided to use social networking and set about creating a 'Bellewaarde Group' on Facebook. This action started to improve the volume of viewers to the main site.

I decided to visit Bellewaarde to see the battlefield and so on 16 June 2012 I stood at the edge of Railway Wood, the same place my ancestor fell. I was the first member of his family to visit in ninety-seven years. I looked around at the quiet fields and felt an emotion like nothing before. I thought of how many mothers, wives and children were left grieving for loved ones lost in a field only a half mile square; those who would never return. The shame was that they had no way of knowing where their men lay. It was then I decided that a memorial should be placed there on the field where so many had fallen. At the inauguration of the Menin Gate in 1927, Field Marshal Herbert Plummer said of the dead: 'They are not missing – they are here'. I now wanted to ensure that this could be said of those who fell on 16 June 1915 at Bellewaarde.

A battlefield memorial will be unveiled on the centenary of the battle on 16 June 2015. The cost of this memorial and the subsequent maintenance will be met by charitable funds. To donate please visit The Battle of Bellewaarde website at www.bellewaarde1915.co.uk and click the 'donate' button.

One evening I received a message from Carole McEntee-Taylor asking if it would be OK to write a book about the battle. She had viewed the website and social media page regarding my idea of a memorial and thought that this was an excellent idea for her to get involved with. We met and discussed how this could be done. I was flattered that she liked my work and regarded the cause worthy of her talent, but it was more than that. Carole explained that her royalties from the sale of the book would go directly to the memorial fund. This kind of selfless generosity is rare and it is a gift that I humbly accepted on behalf of the men, British and German who fought and fell on 16 June 1915.

Martin Clift

Prologue

16 June 1915

It was 2am and dawn was slowly breaking over Bellewaarde. It was exceptionally quiet; the troops of 3rd Division were situated on the western edge of Railway Wood and shrouded in a thick mist which reduced visibility and gave the illusion of safety. Private 21660, Patrick Joseph Carpenter, waited patiently for the order to fire. Born in 1878 in St Andrews, Dublin, Patrick had joined the Army on 9 August 1897 and enlisted in the Field Artillery. When war started in August 1914, Patrick had been posted to the 5th Division Ammunition Column as a driver and by 19 August he was on his way to Mons. His war had begun.

After the retreat from Mons Patrick had fought at Marne, Aisne and Ypres. By 1915 he was no stranger to battle and one of the few remaining members of the original British Army, most of whom had been killed or wounded in the first few months of the war. He had now been posted to the 23rd Battery, part of 40th Brigade, who, in turn, were part of the 3rd Division.

Across the few yards of no man's land, the German troops of Reserve Infantry Regiment (RIR) 248 and 246 were also blanketed in the thick, damp mist. It swirled round their trenches, deadening sound and reinforcing the illusion that all was secure. RIR 246 HQ had just received a report that the enemy was strikingly quiet and Gefreiter Wilhelm Schmid of RIR 248, a member of the Germans' highly prized Machine Gun Company, huddled deeper into his great coat, his eyes closed as he dreamed of those he loved back home. Schmid was to be killed in action on 16 June.

Compared to the destruction and devastation of the Second Battle of Ypres which had finished on 25 May 1915 with an estimated loss of 59,000 British troops, 10,000 French troops and 35,000 German troops (the difference in numbers is believed to be because of the use of chlorine gas by the Germans) the front had been relatively quiet. Well, quiet enough to allow the Germans to bring up RIR 248 to relieve Reserve-Jäger-Battalion 26 between 6 June and 8 June. But the silence was as deceptive as the delusion of safety. The seemingly protective blanket of the mist hid a growing tension.

Although the frontline fighting had reduced considerably over the past few weeks, skirmishes, sniping and intermittent shelling had continued. Men were still dying at an average rate of 300 a day along the length of the front, a front that was not as secure as it could be.

The end of the Battle of Ypres had left a salient protruding into the British front lines. At the southern point of the salient lay the battered, ruined remains

of Hooge. German trenches ran between the Menin Road and the Ypres-Roulers railway and south of the railway was the eastern edge of Railway Wood, also held by the Germans. The British front line ran from opposite Hooge, along the Menin Road to east of Birr Cross Road. It then turned sharply northwards, skirting the eastern edges of Cambridge Road. When it reached the angle formed by the road and the railway line it followed the railway line eastwards for some 300 yards and then turned sharply north-west.

The Germans also held Bellewaarde Ridge, which was situated on the eastern side of the lake. This enabled them to overlook most of the ground east of Ypres, presenting a continual threat to the British front line. But not for much longer.

V Corps, under the command of Lieutenant General Sir E. Allenby, had devised a plan which aimed to take the ridge. This would deprive the enemy of its observation post and at the same time would straighten out the line between Hooge and Railway Wood. It was to be a minor operation that would also provide an effective diversion to the main attack planned to take place on the same day at Givenchy. This minor operation at Bellewaarde was due to begin at 2.50 am, a mere fifty minutes away.

The minutes ticked away, daylight gradually increased and so did the mist. The assault had been entrusted to the 9th and 7th Brigades of 3rd Division, under the command of Major General J.A.L. Haldane. Early the previous afternoon, the men from these Brigades had marched from their billets using two separate routes. Under cover of darkness they had relieved 8th Brigade and were already formed up in four lines.

In addition to the 9th and 7th Brigade, General Plumer of the 2nd Army Group had seconded No 6 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, and No 2 Group, Honourable Artillery Company (HAC), to V Corps for the attack.

The HAC, who only had a limited amount of ammunition, were now waiting in their assembly trench at the apex of the triangle forming the Ypres salient. They had marched in columns of four straight down the Menin Road the previous night during a lull in the shelling.

The 9th Infantry Brigade, left column, consisting of the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers, the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, and the 10th (Scottish) Battalion the King's Liverpool Regiment (Liverpool Scottish) were spread from the north-west corner of Railway Wood almost down to the Menin Gate. In the Fire and Assembly Trenches on the east of Cambridge Road the 4th Royal Fusiliers, 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers and the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers waited. In the second line, occupying the Cambridge Road trench, were the 1st Lincolns, two sections of the Cheshire Field Company R.E. and the Liverpool Scottish.

Meanwhile the 7th Brigade had taken up their position in the Assembly Trenches west of Cambridge Road. 1 Battalion and 4 Battalion were positioned in the Assembly Trenches on the south side of the Menin Road and a Motor Machine Gun Battery had been set up on the south side of the Menin Road.

Each infantryman was loaded down with two extra bandoliers, one day's ration as well as his iron ration, two empty sandbags and a waterproof sheet. Each battalion was issued with 400 hand grenades and 150 wire cutters while two of the battalions had shovels on their backs. Having arrived at the Assembly Trenches after their march through the Belgian countryside, the men settled down and waited for their orders. They hoped that the enemy were unaware of their presence and the planned offensive, but as the trenches were overlooked they knew this was probably unlikely.

And they were right. Across the small expanse of no man's land the Germans knew that an attack was imminent.

Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 246

> 'On 14 June 1915 an aerial photograph was received by the regiment. Clearly visible on it was the fact that south of the Menin – Ypres road between Hooge and 3rd Borne and east and west of the track between Eierwäldchen [Egg Copse – Railway Wood] the enemy had dug a complex of trenches (a so-called trench honeycomb) with four parallel lines of trenches arranged one behind the other. It was estimated that six battalions could be assembled within them ready to launch a quick succession of assaulting waves. The regiment realized at once that an attack was imminent and had the artillery increase its rate of firing. Stocks of ammunition and hand grenades were increased. In the main battle trench the firing points along the parapet were completed. The gunners of the machine gun platoon tested their weapons and inspected their ammunition. The artillery was briefed in fullest detail and kept completely up to date with the results of all observations.'[1]

Although the 2.00 am report had suggested all was quiet, the Germans did not relax their guard. Then, at 3.00 am (The German Reserve Infantry Regimental diary states it was quiet at 3.00 am. This would be 2.00 am British summer time) the artillery observation officer and the officer commanding 11th Company reported simultaneously.

Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 246

> 'The enemy have opened gaps [in their wire] ready to assault. Noise and movement can be clearly detected in the enemy trenches. Strangely the enemy artillery is completely silent.'[2]

1. Extract from Leutnant der Reserve Louis Orgeldinger *Das Württembergische Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 246* (1931) Stuttgart, 97–107. Translation © Dr Jack Sheldon 2012.
2. Translation courtesy of Dr Jack Sheldon ©2012.

This information was immediately passed to the artillery by the Regimental Adjutant and light and heavy artillery fire began to rain down on the British infantry positions. But the intensity of the fire soon died away and a heavy, tension-filled silence resumed.

Back in the British lines the men huddled down as they sheltered from the brief, but intense German bombardment. As the firing died away they stood up, dusted themselves down, stretchered away the few casualties and resumed their positions by the front trench wall and waited. The time for the assault grew ever closer and the men prepared to go over the top. As the seconds ticked away the silence was broken only by the muttered sound of prayers and the gentle rustling of the bandoliers on khaki as men crossed themselves and asked for God's protection. At 2.50 am (although some British Regimental diaries report it as 2.30 am) the planned bombardment began. After the silence the onslaught seemed even more deafening than it usually did as more than 200 British guns competed with each other to pound the enemy and their defences to dust. As the air around them filled with acrid corrosive smoke and their ears felt as if they would burst, the German artillery began to retaliate. The cacophony of sound increased as shells burst all around them. The explosions sent dust and debris into the trenches and created giant depressions in the already fractured ground. The men on both sides crouched down, heads bent as they instinctively sought to protect themselves from the onslaught. By the end of the day more than 4,000 men would be casualties in a field approximately half a mile square. It was 16 June 1915 and the First Battle of Bellewaarde had just begun.

Part One

The Protagonists

Chapter 1

The Allies

At the end of the First Battle of Ypres on 25 May 1915 the opposing armies settled in to a period of general trench warfare. Both French and British armies set about improving their defences while preparing for the next offensive. Although the volume of shelling had reduced, sniping and machine gun fire continued unabated, albeit in a more organized and systematic way. Ammunition was so short on the British side that Sir John French had no option but to order the First Army to restrict its operations to those that would not use too much ammunition or too many troops.

Field Marshal Sir Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby, 1st Viscount Allenby.

The Germans now held the whole of Bellewaarde Ridge and their front line was well established to the north of the Menin Road. From their positions overlooking the town they continued to bombard Ypres, gradually destroying the drainage, buildings and other infrastructure. This eventually led to the decision to evacuate the civilians.

But, despite its deserted appearance during the daylight hours, Ypres was far from empty. It was actually occupied by thousands of allied soldiers, horses and waggons, mostly moving about under cover of darkness. With the civilians gone their possessions became easy prey to looting by the occupying troops.

Although this was strictly forbidden by the army most soldiers could see little wrong in helping themselves to items that were likely to disappear in the next German bombardment anyway. Many of the first scavengers managed to find expensive wines and cigars in cellars conveniently exposed by the shelling. The more enterprising of these even managed to remove enough wine to earn a little extra by selling it on to local wine merchants. Other items were buried, the intention being to recover them later, if the soldier survived.

This practice was not just restricted to junior ranks. Although the officers did not encourage theft they were unlikely to complain if a much needed table or armchair appeared at HQ or in a dug out on the front line. But unless their duties took them into Ypres, most ordinary frontline soldiers did not have the opportunity to look for souvenirs. The town was strictly out of bounds when off duty and on the way to and from the front it was a dangerous place to be.

General Joffre, Chief of French General Staff, was insistent the BEF took over a bigger share of the front. Although much of it was quiet the French were responsible for over 400 miles of the 475 miles from Switzerland to the sea.

However, he objected to the BEF relieving his troops near the coast, at Ypres and either side of the Belgian army at Nieuport, because the front there was too intimately connected with the defence of the fortress at Dunkirk. It was finally agreed that the British would take over the whole of the Ypres salient, a change that was completed on 7 and 8 June.

But this still did not satisfy the French who wanted the BEF to evacuate the Ypres salient so the troops could be used to relieve the six divisions of General de Castelnau's army between Hebuterne and Chaulnes. This was a front of twenty-one miles that was separated from the British right near Bethune by a thirty mile section held by the French Tenth Army.

Sir John French, Chief of Staff of the British Army and Commander of the BEF, wrote a strongly worded letter to the War Office on 11 June pointing out the damage that would be done to British and Belgian morale if this withdrawal went ahead. He also raised concerns that such a move would shorten the German line considerably more than the British line. This would free up enemy forces and thus leave the BEF open to a new offensive. But these were not his only concerns. He also objected strongly to a number of British divisions being included in the French line. He added that if this was to go ahead it would need eight British Divisions rather than six French Divisions because the French had more guns and more ammunition and therefore did not need as many men to hold the front line.

In 1914, the total size of the British Army was 710,000 but this included the Territorial Army and the reservists. There were only 247,000 regular personnel, of whom 13,000 were officers. The BEF was only 80,000 strong and consisted of six infantry divisions and one cavalry division.

Pre-war planning in Britain had seriously underestimated casualty rates. Planners had assumed there would be about forty per cent casualties over six months and between sixty-five to seventy per cent over twelve months. In reality the BEF had experienced over sixty per cent casualties in just the first three months.

They had also seriously underestimated how much ammunition would be needed for the war. There were only 1,000 shells per 18-pounder gun, with 300 shells in reserve and only 500 shells were produced over the first six months. As the gun had the ability to fire four shells per minute this meant the entire allotment of shells for six months would only allow for seven to eight hours of sustained fire support.

John Denton Pinkstone French

French became known as the Earl of Ypres in 1922. Born in Ripple Vale, Kent, in 1852, he joined the Royal Navy in 1866 as a naval cadet on HMS *Britannia* but he did not enjoy the Navy so in 1870 he resigned, intending to join the army instead. After spending some time in the Militia he was given a commission in the 8th Hussars in 1874. A few weeks later he transferred to the 19th Hussars. He became a Captain in 1880 and by 1883 he had been promoted to Major.

He served in the Sudan Campaign of 1884–1885 as a member of the party attached to Sir Herbert Stewart's column. This column was part of the forces sent to relieve General Gordon and he was present at the actions of Abu Klea, Gubat and Metammah. French distinguished himself in these battles and, by the time he returned to England, he had been promoted to a Brevet Lieutenant Colonel and Second in Command of the 19th Hussars. In 1889 he became the Commander of the Regiment. In 1891 the Regiment went to India with French in command. In 1892, having served the required period in command, he became staff officer to General Sir George Luck, Inspector-General of Cavalry in India. After General Sir George Luck transferred to the War Department both he and French returned to England. In 1895 French was appointed AAG for Cavalry.

In 1897 French took command of the newly formed 2nd Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot and, after the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 he was given command of the mounted troops in Natal under Sir George White. As in the Sudan French distinguished himself. He successfully dislodged the Boers from their stronghold at Elandslaate and held Cape Colony while other British commanders suffered defeats and setbacks. January 1900 saw General Roberts advancing northwards to break the siege of Kimberley. French's orders were to turn the left flank of General Kronje's army. This would bring about the retreat of the Boers from Magersfontein and leave the way open to relieve the siege at Kimberley. On 11 February 1900 French's cavalry and mounted infantry forced the River Riet and by 15 February he entered Kimberley. He carried on to seize Koedoesrand Drift and then took part in the successful defeat of General Kronje's Boer forces at Paadeberg. He followed this with further successes at Poplar Grove and Driefontein against De Wet and Delarey. As the advance continued toward Johannesburg with Pretoria falling on 5 June, French played a major role in the Battle of Diamond Hill on 11 June and the subsequent pursuit of General Botha's forces.

French's reward was to be promoted to Major-General and he received the KCB. He went on to capture Middleburg and Barberton in the Eastern Transvaal and assumed control of Johannesburg District in November 1900. He remained here until June 1901 when he was transferred to the Cape. Here he commanded the forces south of the Orange River until the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902 which bought an end to the war. In August 1902 French returned to England to take up the Aldershot Command. He was promoted to Lieutenant General and awarded a KCMG. In November 1907 he was promoted again, this time to full General and made a GCVO. In December he was appointed Inspector General of the Forces.

As the BEF attempted to confront this new environment, senior military leaders faced massive managerial problems stemming from the rapidly growing size of the British Army. By 1917, there would be 1.5 million soldiers in fifty-six divisions assigned to Western Front, and the staff officer requirements of 1917 alone matched the entire officer cadre of 1914.

John Denton Pinkstone French was appointed Chief of Staff of the British Army in 1911 and Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1912–1913. In 1913 he was promoted to Field Marshal. In April 1914 he resigned as Chief of the Imperial General Staff because the Cabinet would not back him over his decision not to use cavalry forces at Curragh against Ulster during the Irish Home Rule Crisis.

In the years leading up to the Great War the British Army was very much a product of the Field Marshal's leadership. French was also considered by many to be the driving force behind most of its tactical progress. By the time the war started it was a modern fully equipped army, mainly due to his efforts. It was, therefore, a foregone conclusion that he would be given command of the British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) in August 1914.

However he was soon at odds with Lord Kitchener and Sir Douglas Haig. The Cabinet and French wanted the BEF deployed to Belgium rather than Amiens. Kitchener and Haig both argued that deploying the BEF to Amiens would place it in the ideal position to deliver a vigorous counter-attack when they knew the route of the German advance. Kitchener argued that placing the BEF at Mons would be a big mistake as the Belgium Army would not be able to hold this position against the Germans. Trying to reinforce them would just lead to the BEF having to abandon both the position and much of their supplies.

Kitchener was proved right as the BEF were soon forced to abandon Mons and Le Cateau, in danger of being flanked when the Belgium Army failed. While the battle was on going, French gave a series of hasty orders to abandon positions and equipment. These were largely ignored by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, his subordinate in charge of II Corps. Instead Smith-Dorrien defended Le Cateau vigorously which gave the troops time to reorganize and make a fighting withdrawal. This refusal to obey orders caused a massive rift between the two men and would lead to Smith-Dorrien being relieved of his command several months later.[3]

After the disaster at Mons French became increasingly indecisive and seemed more concerned with preserving his troops than fighting the enemy. At one point he had even suggested moving the BEF back to the channel ports rather than aid the French. It took an emergency visit in September 1914, from the then Secretary of War, Kitchener, to strengthen his resolve. As the main armies dug in towards

3. This happened after he advocated a tactical withdrawal away from the German front lines after the first use of poison gas. Several days later French ordered an almost identical withdrawal on the advice of General Sir Herbert Plumer.

the end of 1914 and trench warfare began, French remained in command and in December he had received the Order of Merit.

The BEF consisted of a GHQ and a number of Corps. By late 1914 the size of the army was so great that the decision was taken to sub divide the forces into two separate armies, each commanded by a Lieutenant General.

The Second Army was formed in France on 26 December 1914 and initially came under the command of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. After Smith-Dorrien resigned it fell under the command of Sir Herbert Plumer. By March 1915 these armies became officially defined as composing of an Army HQ, at least two Corps,

Lieutenant General Sir E. Allenby

Allenby was the son of Hynman and Catherine Anne Allenby (nee Cane) and was educated at Haileybury College. He had tried initially to enter the Indian Civil Service but, after failing the entrance exam in 1880 he sat the exam for the Royal Military College in Sandhurst. On 10 May 1882 he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons. He joined his regiment in South Africa later that year. After serving at the Cavalry Depot in Canterbury he was promoted to Captain on 10 January 1888 and then returned to South Africa.

Allenby came back to Great Britain in 1890 and sat the entry exam for the Staff College at Camberley. Although he failed he re-sat the exam the following year and this time passed. At the same time Captain Douglas Haig of the 7th Hussars also entered the Staff College and the two men became rivals. Although Haig was a better rider Allenby was more popular and was made Master of the Draghounds. He was promoted to Major on 19 May 1897 and then posted to the 3rd Cavalry Brigade. He served in Ireland as the Brigade Major in March 1898.

When the Boer War broke out Allenby returned to his Regiment and landed in Cape Town, South Africa later that year. He took part in several actions in 1900 including Colesberg on 11 January, Klip Drift on 15 February and Dronfied Ridge on 16 February. He was also involved in actions at Zand River on 10 May, Kalkheuval Pass on 2 June, Barberton on 12 September and Tevreden on 16 October when Jan Smuts, the Boer General was defeated. On New Year's Day 1901 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, followed swiftly by further promotion to local Colonel on 29 April. He became a Lieutenant Colonel on 2 August 1902 and a Brevet Colonel on 22 August 1902.

Back home in 1902 Allenby became the Commanding Officer of 5th Royal Irish Lancers in Colchester and was promoted to the temporary rank of Brigadier on 19 October 1905. He assumed command of the 4th Cavalry Brigade in 1906, was promoted to Major General on 10 September 1909 and was appointed Inspector General of Cavalry in 1910. As he grew older he had a tendency to bellow at his subordinates and was known for his explosive outbursts of rage which, combined with his powerful physical stature, led to the nickname of 'The Bull'.

At the outbreak of the Great War the BEF contained one Cavalry Division which was commanded by Allenby who distinguished himself when his unit covered the retreat after the Battle of Mons. His reward was to be made commander of the Cavalry Corps when the army was expanded and divided into two.

with various units attached as Army Troops. Each Army HQ, which consisted of thirty-one officers and 106 other ranks, reported up to GHQ. The Corps were not permanently attached to an Army and neither were the Divisions below them. These Army troops varied greatly and from day to day and although the number of Corps under each Army was two it could be increased if conditions demanded it. In addition to the two Corps, Army HQ also had supply troops, tactical units and strategic firepower, including artillery, engineers, transport, medical, machine guns, veterinary, labour and mounted troops.

Both Army and Corps HQs remained fixed in one place whilst Divisions were moved around with control passing from one Army to another as the fighting demanded. The Second Army HQ had its Headquarters in Hazebrouck in France.

Commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir E. Allenby, V Corps had its HQ in Poperinghe.

There were two Divisions in II Corps, the 3rd and the 5th, and other attached troops were the 2nd Army HQ Signal Company, RE (E (Air Line) Section and M, O and P (Cable) Sections), No 2 Bridging Train RE, C Squadron North Irish Horse, 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders and A Section, No 19 Field Ambulance RAMC.

The units of 3rd Division, based in Southern Command in England, arrived in France at the beginning of the war to join the BEF and remained on the Western Front throughout. As part of II Corps they had all arrived in France by 16 August 1914 and had gone straight to Mons. Positioned along the Mons-Conde Canal they took more than 3,000 casualties, but also won the first three VCs of the war.

Following the retreat from Mons they fought on the Aisne before moving up to French Flanders in October 1914. Here they fought south of Armentieres. During this fighting on 14 October Major General Hubert I. W. Hamilton was killed, the first Divisional Commander to be killed in the war.

Major General Mackenzie took over, but he was invalided home within ten days. The CRA, Brigadier-General Wing temporarily assumed command and the Division moved 20 miles north to the Ypres salient before trench warfare set in.

On 21 November Major-General James Aylmer Lowthorpe Haldane was appointed Commander.

Haldane was considered to be a tireless and resolute Commander, giving equal priority to tactical drive, administration and the well-being of his soldiers who were now spending four days on the front line followed by four days in billets. Although the Division endured the same hardships of the trenches as everyone else, he insisted on comfortable rest areas when the battalions were out of the line.

The fighting over the next few weeks was so ferocious that between mid-October and the end of November 1914 the Division as a whole had suffered 8,355 casualties.

During Haldane's command the 3rd Division became renowned for its reliability and was often used to reinforce or take over vulnerable sectors and to retake lost ground. Haldane was heard to say several times that the Germans often boasted

Major General James Alymer Lowthorpe Haldane

Haldane was born on 17 November 1862 and was a cousin of the War Secretary, Aylmer Haldane. In 1882, at the age of twenty, he was commissioned into the Gordon Highlanders and became part of the Waziristan Field Force between 1894 and 1895. (Waziristan is a mountainous region bordering Afghanistan in the northwest of Pakistan and covers some 11,585km (4,473 square miles). It is populated by ethnic Pashtuns). In 1895 he took part in the Chitral Expedition, a military expedition sent to relieve the fort at Chitral which was under siege after a local coup in which a British force of around 400 men was besieged until relieved by two expeditions from Gilgit and Peshawar. On 18 February 1896, Haldane was promoted to Lieutenant and a year later was promoted to Captain. He spent the next two years trying to quell the Afridis rebellion in the Tirah Campaign, an Indian Frontier War*.

In 1898 Haldane became aide-de-camp to the Commander in Chief East Indies until the Second Boer War. Whilst he was a prisoner in Pretoria he planned the escape for which Winston Churchill was to become famous. Although he failed to escape at the same time he succeeded in doing so later. He was awarded the DSO on 20 May 1898 and promoted to Major in 1902, followed swiftly to Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel on 24 July of the same year. Promotions continued to follow, first to Brevet Colonel in March 1906, Substantive Colonel in November 1906 and temporary Brigadier-General on 1 October 1909. In 1910 he became Commander of the 10th Brigade, part of 4th Division. He continued to command them during the Retreat from Mons and the fighting following the retreat.

that once the 3rd Division left the area they would be able to retake the trenches they had lost.

Despite the harsh conditions 3rd Division soon settled into trench warfare and by 21 January 1915 they had achieved several successes. The divisional cyclist company had been trained as specialist bombing teams, experiments with trench mortars and grenades had proved successful and they had developed a visual signalling system by which the infantry could direct artillery fire onto the enemy trenches. Sappers had also been attached to infantry strong points to ensure damage to trenches could quickly be repaired.

In early 1915 the 3rd Division moved up to the Ypres salient and took over the trenches opposite the Messines Ridge, St Eloi and The Bluff. From here they moved up to the Menin Road sector at Hooge and Bellewaarde.

In June 1915 3rd Division consisted of four Brigades: 7th, 8th, 9th and 76th, Divisional Troops, Divisional Mounted Troops (C Sqn South Irish Horse and 3rd

* For sixteen years the Afridi tribe had received a subsidy from the government of British India for safeguarding the Khyber Pass and the government had maintained a local regiment stationed in the Pass that was composed entirely of Afridis. However the local tribesmen rose up and captured all the posts in the Khyber held by their own countrymen, and attacked the forts on the Samana Range near the city of Peshawar.

Company Army Cyclist Corps), Divisional Artillery (XXIII Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, X1 Brigade Field Artillery, XLI Brigade Royal Field Artillery, XXX (Howitzer) Brigade Royal Field Artillery, 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column), and the Royal Army Medical Corps: 4A Sanitary Section, 7th Field Ambulance, 8th Field Ambulance, 9th Field Ambulance.

The 7th Brigade consisted of 3rd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, 2nd Battalion South Lancashire Regiment, 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment, 1st Battalion Honourable Artillery Company, 1/4th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment, 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles, Mortar Batteries RFA, 438th (1/1st Cheshire) Field Company, 9th Field Ambulance and 4A Sanitary Section. Brigade HQ was in some old fortified gun emplacements under the ancient ramparts of the town in Ypres. Several items had been salvaged from the ruins of the town including tables, beds and carpets and it was considered to be very comfortable.

The 8th Brigade consisted of 2nd Battalion the Royal Scots, 4th Battalion the Middlesex Regiment, 1st Battalion the Gordon Highlanders and the 2nd Battalion, the Suffolk Regiment.

The 9th Brigade consisted of 1st Battalion The Northumberland Fusiliers, 4th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, 1st Battalion The Lincolnshire Regiment, 1st Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1/10th Battalion the King's (Liverpool Regiment), West Yorkshire Regiment. It was commanded by Brigadier-General, F.C. Shaw.

Divisional Troops consisted of 3rd Divisional Motor Ambulance Workshop Unit, 4A Sanitary Section, and the 7th, 8th and 9th Field Ambulance.

With the loss of so much of the regular army during the Retreat from Mons there was a massive drive for the recruitment of volunteers. Army Order No 324 issued on 21 August 1914 authorized the formation of six new Divisions. Formed from volunteers it was initially numbered 8th (Light) Division but as more regular army units became available to create a Division it was renumbered the 14th (Light) Division. Despite having no equipment or arms of any kind the recruits were judged to be ready by May 1915 but their deployment to France was delayed because of a lack of rifle and artillery ammunition. They served on the Western Front throughout the war.

In 1915 the 14th Division consisted of 41st Brigade, 42nd Brigade, 43rd Brigade, Divisional Troops, Divisional Mounted Troops, Divisional Artillery, Royal Engineers and Royal Medical Corps and other Divisional Troops.

42nd Brigade was commanded by Brigadier General C. J. Markham and consisted of 5th Battalion the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, the 5th King's Shropshire Light Infantry, 9th Battalion the Rifle Brigade and the 9th Battalion The Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

Chapter 2

The Germans

In 1914 every German male was liable for military service for a total of twenty-seven years. This period started at the end of their seventeenth year and lasted until the end of their forty-fifth year. The individual would be called up aged twenty and then serve for two years with the Colours, (three years in the Cavalry) followed by four or five years as a Reserve. He was then transferred to the 1st Battalion of the Landwehr for five years and then to the 2nd Battalion of the Landsturm where he stayed until forty-five years old. The 1st Battalion of the Landsturm consisted of those aged between seventeen and twenty waiting for call up. There was also an Ersatz Reserve for those who were physically fit but not called up for National Service for some reason or other. A large number of those who were shot down by the rapid, accurate rifle fire of the BEF at Mons were Ersatz Reservists as were those during the First Battle of Ypres.

For recruiting and mobilization purposes Germany was divided into twenty-four Army Corps Districts. Each district provided a complete Army Corps of two Divisions plus supporting arms and services. The districts were numbered I-XXI plus I – III Bavarian. There was also a Guard Corps which recruited from Prussia and Alsace and Lorraine. Although composition of the Army Corps varied a typical one would consist of two infantry Divisions, a rifle (Jaeger) Battalion, a Pioneer Battalion, four batteries of heavy artillery, a bridging train, signals (telephone, telegraph and wireless), a flying detachment and an airship detachment, ammunition and supply columns, transport columns, field hospitals, field batteries and remount depots. The total strength was around 44,000 of all ranks.

The German basic Infantry Regiment unit was more like a British brigade. It had three battalions numbered I-III whereas the British version had varying numbers of battalions. Like the British each Battalion Section had machine guns of six guns or two per battalion, but the Germans grouped their guns into a company, something the British wouldn't do until much later in 1915.

There were two regiments in a brigade and two brigades to a division which equalled twelve battalions, again the same as the British. German Divisional Artillery had seventy-two guns compared to Britain's seventy-six and the number of machine guns was the same. The strength of a German Division was 17,600 all ranks compared to the British 18,073.

The British began reducing the strength of their Divisions in early 1918 due to a manpower shortage. The Germans began the process much earlier, in March

1915. But they used the reduced numbers to form new Divisions of three Infantry Regiments: nine Battalions and a reduction in artillery to one Regiment: thirty-six guns. The strength of these was 12,500. By 1917 this was the standard throughout the German army.

The Germans started the war with a standing army of fifty Divisions. By February 1915 that had risen to 105, by August 1815 it was 170 and by the end of 1916 was 203. The total at the end of 1917 was 241.

Thanks to conscription the German peacetime army stood at 900,000 men with four million trained reserves and the potential to double that to nearly ten million. The strength of the army lay in its infantry of which there were seventy-eight Divisions and 110,000 well trained officers and its Cavalry of over 100,000 men. Although its artillery was not as good as that of the British 18-pounder and French 75mm 'soixante–quinze' it had over 3,000 medium and heavy guns and mortars with calibres of 150mm, 210mm, 305mm and 420mm and their ammunition was very good quality.

The Schlieffen Plan relied on the German 8th Army to contain any threat on the Russian Front while the other five German Armies would crash through Belgium, capture Brussels, then swing west and south into France via Lille. With its right flank on the Channel coast it would cut through the Somme and Amiens and pass round Paris before encircling it and taking it from behind. The whole operation was expected to take forty days and speed was of the essence.

The first stumbling block came at Liege where the fortress garrison that guarded the River Meuse and all routes to Brussels was commanded by General Gerard Leman. The Belgians fought courageously and, while taking heavy casualties, managed to halt the Germans. This shocked the Germans who were unable to believe their superior forces had been stopped by, what they considered to be, inferior opposition. The Schlieffen Plan had hit its first hurdle.

However, eventually the heavy Krupp 420mm and Austrian supplied Skoda 305mm guns defeated Leman and the Schlieffen Plan was back on again. France immediately mobilized to protect its borders, confident that it too had an unbeatable plan to ensure a swift victory over their old enemy.

Unfortunately Plan XVII was based on a rather naïve belief that the French spirit would be enough to defeat the Germans. It began by stating that, 'Whatever the circumstances, it is the Commander in Chief's intention to advance, all forces united, to the attack of the German armies.'

The French army was more equipped for a colonial war, its infantry still wearing blue tunics and red trousers as they had done nearly 100 years ago. Many French officers considered it to be their fashionable duty to wear white gloves and carry a sword rather than a revolver and they lacked sufficient numbers of medium and heavy artillery.

The first part of the French plan was to retake Alsace and Lorraine, lost as part of the Franco-Prussian war, and initially they appeared to succeed. However it was not long before the Germans counter attacked with ruthless efficiency, their heavy

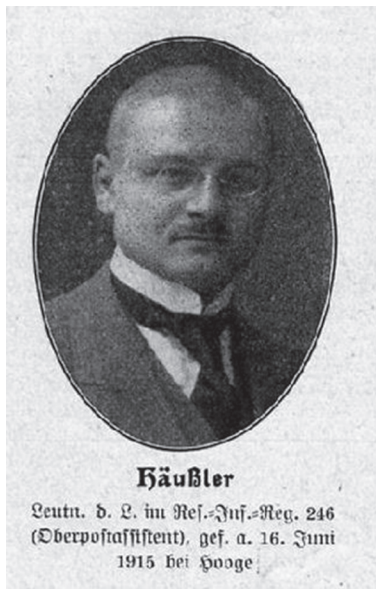
artillery wiping out whole regiments of infantry and cavalry, over 300,000 men, who presented an easy target in their blue tunics and red trousers.

On 20 August General von Kluck's 1st Army entered Brussels and in the south General von Bulow's 2nd Army entered Namur. By 22 August they were heading for Mons putting them on a collision course for the BEF who were dug in just south of Mons. To start with the 1st Army were bought to an abrupt halt by the speed and accuracy of the British rifle fire, but then the BEF began to withdraw. The French were in total confusion and the 500,000 men of the three German Armies on the right wing were speeding towards Paris. In the east at Tannenburg the Russian 1st and 2nd Armies had been heavily defeated alleviating the threat to Germany's eastern border.

As the BEF and the French continued to withdraw General George's 'Papa' Joffe decided to strengthen his left wing to prevent Kluck's 1st Army outflanking the BEF and the French 4th and 5th Armies. All sides were completely exhausted. The Germans had been fighting and marching since Liege with little respite and they allowed a gap to open up between their 1st and 2nd Armies.

Alarmed by the gap Bulow asked for help from von Kluck. Bulow then halted his advance and swung back towards Paris and the River Marne while Kluck's 1st Army swung south east towards Bulow's 2nd Army and the River Marne. In doing so he exposed his right flank to the front line of General Maunory's 6th Army. By 11 September the German 1st and 2nd Armies had fallen back and the soldiers were exhausted and disillusioned. The Schlieffen Plan had unravelled completely and they did not have a Plan B.

But the pursuit of the Germans by the BEF and the French was much too slow and too cautious and they were held up by brave German rearguard actions and the demolition of bridges. By 13 September both sides were digging in and then the 'Race to the Sea' began as both sides tried to outflank each other as their armies headed northwards.



Leutn Eduard Haussler.

Erich Georg Anton Sebastian von Falkenhayn

Erich Georg Anton Sebastian von Falkenhayn was born to impoverished, but aristocratic parents in Graudenz, West Prussia on 11 September 1861. He joined the army in 1880 as a Second Lieutenant, aged nineteen. After leaving the Academy of War in Berlin as a Major, he served as a military instructor to the Chinese Army in 1899. He was a member of the German General Staff, under Count von Waldersee, in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion and he saw action when the Allies marched to relieve Peking. He continued to serve in the German General Staff on his return to Germany and in 1911 he commanded the 4th Regiment of Guards. He was a favourite of Wilhelm II as he had been one of the young Crown Prince's military instructors and in 1912 he was appointed Chief of Staff of the 4th Army Corps.

In 1913 he was promoted to Prussian Minister of War. He clashed frequently with Helmuth von Moltke, the Chief of Staff, but, on 14 September 1914, after the defeat at Marne, the Kaiser, Wilhelm II, dismissed Moltke and replaced him with Falkenhayn. For the next five months he held both Prussian Minister of War and Chief of Staff. He was a cautious, highly intelligent man, but often indecisive and aloof. He was well suited to trench warfare and also inclined towards defensive rather than offensive operations. He also considered that the Western Front was the most important area of battle which bought him into conflict with von Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the heroes of the east.

The German 4th Army was commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg.

Generalfeldmarschall Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg

Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg was born on 23 December 1865. He was the eldest child of Duke Philipp of Württemberg and Arch Duchess Maria Theresa of Austria and great grandson of Frederick II Eugene, Duke of Württemberg. At the beginning of the Great War Duke Albrecht commanded the German 4th Army and he led them to victory in the Battle of the Ardennes in August 1914. The 4th Army also saw action in the First Battle of the Marne. In October they were transferred to Flanders where Duke Albrecht commanded them during the Battle of the Yser. He also commanded the German forces during the Second Battle of Ypres, where poison gas was used on a large scale for the first time.

The German 4th Army on 22 April 1915 is listed as consisting of XXIII Reserve Corps, XXVI Reserve Corps, XXVII Reserve Corps, XV Corps (132 Infantry Regiment) and the Heavy Artillery of XXIII, XXVI and XXVII Reserve Corps – formed from Saxon and Württemberg units and was commanded by Generalleutnant Adolf von Carlowitz from 25 August 1914 until 27 October 1914 when it came under the command of General der Artillerie Richard von Schubert.

Soldier Reserve Infanterie Regiment Nr 246 By kind permission of John Beech.

Gefreiter from Reserve Infanterie Regiment Nr 246 Munsingen October 1914 By kind permission of John Beech.

Hans Karl Adolph von Carlowitz

Von Carlowitz was born on 25 March 1858 in Riesa Sachsen (Saxony) to Georg von Carlowitz, a courthouse officer and his wife Ida (nee von Könneritz). After he completed his Abitur he began studying law at Leipzig University. However, after a couple of years he decided to join the Saxon Infantry having previously served as a volunteer with the 8th Infantry Regiment for a year.

He served in several general staff positions within the Saxon Army at both Division and Corps level and also with the Prussian General Staff in Berlin. He replaced von Hausen as Saxony's War Minister in May 1914 and was then called on to head the newly formed XXVII Reserve Corps (Sächsisch-Württembergische Reservekorps). This command did not last long as, although he returned to the field after a heart ailment in October 1914, it was only as an Infantry Division Commander. His replacement was Louis Theodor Richard von Schubert.

Louis Theodor Richard von Schubert

Von Schubert was born 19 April 1850 in Posen (Poznan) Poland. He had begun his military career as a Lieutenant in 1868 in a field artillery regiment. He earned the Iron Cross in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 and in 1902 he was promoted to Lieutenant General and served as Military Governor in Ulm Fortress. He was promoted to General of Artillery in 1907 and as Inspector General of Field Artillery from 1907–1911 he successfully campaigned for the increased use of field artillery as a tactical weapon.

When the war started in August 1914 he was attached to General Heeringen's 7th Army in command of the XIV Reserve Corps (Karlsruhe). One month later he transferred to take command of the 8th Army on the Eastern Front. However within days he came into conflict with General Francois, Commander of 8th Army's 1 Corps, over strategy and two weeks later he returned to Flanders to take command of XXVII Reserve Corps.

There were two divisions in XXVIII Corps, the 53rd Reserve Division and the 54th Reserve Division, both formed in September 1914 as part of the new wave of divisions set up at the start of the war.

Like most pre-First World War divisions, the 54th Reserve Division was originally organized as a square division. The main body was composed of four regimental elements. As tactical purposes could often require a regiment to be split

An infantryman Württembergisches Reserve Infantry Regiment 246 By kind permission of John Beech.

Leutn Karl Schellhorn.